



MEDIA FAIRNESS INITIATIVE:

A WEEKLY LOOK AT BIAS IN THE NEWS

Friday, October 19, 2007



Democrats Refuse to Allow Vote on Bill Opposing Fairness Doctrine

Congressman Mike Pence (R-IN) introduced a petition this week that would force an up or down vote on the House Floor for legislation that opposes the so-called Fairness Doctrine. The Broadcaster Freedom Act, which would ensure that no future president could regulate the airwaves of America without Congressional approval, has yet to be scheduled for a vote.

"To my colleagues in Congress I respectfully say: If you oppose the Fairness Doctrine, sign the petition," Pence said. "If you cherish the dynamic national asset that is American talk radio, sign the petition. If you simply believe that broadcast freedom deserves an up or down vote on the floor of the People's House, sign the petition."

The Fairness Doctrine would limit the freedom of broadcasters to openly express their views, effectively muffling talk radio personalities such as Rush Limbaugh.

The petition requires 218 signatures to force a vote, but Congressional Democrats have refused to sign it.

In June, 309 Members of the House voted for an amendment to ban the Fairness Doctrine for the next fiscal year.

Newspapers Ignore Falling Budget Deficit

The U.S. budget deficit narrowed for the third straight year, reaching its lowest amount in five years, but several of the nation's largest newspapers ignored the good economic news. On October 12, the day after the new figures were released, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times* did not report on the falling deficit at all.



By contrast, *The Wall Street Journal* decided the falling deficit was newsworthy:

"The federal deficit narrowed in fiscal 2007, the third straight annual reduction, as the continued economic recovery helped the growth of tax receipts outpace the growth of government spending." ("U.S. Budget Deficit Narrowed To Lowest Level In Years," *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/12/07)

Meanwhile, *The New York Times* editorial board took a pessimistic view on the news:

"But the economic arguments are nonsense, none more so than the claim ... that lower tax rates will inevitably generate more tax revenues." (Editorial, "What, Me Worry?" *The New York Times*, 10/12/07)



GOP Candidates Take Turns as Media Targets

All of the major GOP presidential candidates have found themselves to be targets of the mainstream media at one time or another.

The most recent victim of the media's assault is former Sen. Fred Thompson, the newest candidate to enter the campaign. On the day of his debut at a Republican presidential debate, ABC's *Good Morning America* and *World News* ran audio tapes of Richard Nixon accusing Thompson of being "dumb as hell" during the Watergate investigation in 1973.

A day later, *Washington Post* business columnist Steven Pearlstein personally attacked Thompson in an online web chat:

"Fred Thompson's candidacy is a total creation of the media. His performance yesterday ought to have been an embarrassment, not just to a former US Senator, but to the press, which spent so much time building up this guy. He's a joke, really. Almost nothing thoughtful to say on economic or business issues. Not a serious candidate, in my opinion. But then again, I'm not part of the traveling press corps."